

M.A. , Semester II, Economics Paper-iv Environmental Economics

# Environmental Impact Assessment

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# Environmental Impact Assessment

- Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development has been the cornerstones of the policies and procedures governing the industrial and other developmental activities in India.

## **The Need for EIA**

- Every anthropogenic activity has some impact on the environment. More often it is harmful to the environment than benign. However, mankind as it is developed today cannot live without taking up these activities for his food, security and other needs. Consequently, there is a need to harmonize developmental activities with the environmental concerns.
- It is desirable to ensure that the development options under consideration are sustainable. In doing so, environmental consequences must be characterized early in the project cycle and accounted for in the project design.

# EIA

- Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is one of the tools available with the planners to achieve the goal of harmonizing development activities with the environmental concerns.
- EIA integrates the environmental concerns in the developmental activities right at the time of initiating for preparing the feasibility report. In doing so it can enable the integration of environmental concerns and mitigation measures in project development.
- EIA can often prevent future liabilities or expensive alterations in project design.
- The objective of EIA is to foresee the potential environmental problems that would arise out of a proposed development and address them in the project's planning and design stage.

- EIA/ Environment Management Plan (EMP) should assist planners and government authorities in the decision making process by identifying the key impacts/issues and formulating the mitigation measures.
- EIA is a planning tool which is accepted as an integral component of sound decision-making.
- Ministry of Environment & Forests & Climate Change (MoE&F&CC) has taken several policy initiatives and enacted environmental and pollution control legislations to prevent indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources and to promote integration of environmental concerns in developmental projects.
- One such initiative is the Notification on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of developmental projects 1994 under the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

# INDIAN POLICIES REQUIRING EIA

- The environmental impact assessment in India was started in 1976-77 when the Planning Commission asked the then Department of Science and Technology to examine the river-valley projects from environmental angle.
- This was subsequently extended to cover those projects, which required approval of the Public Investment Board.
- These were administrative decision and lacked the legislative support.

- The Government of India enacted the Environment (Protection) Act on 1986. To achieve the objectives of the Act, one of the decisions that were taken is to make environmental impact assessment statutory.

**The following impacts of the project should be assessed:**

- **Air**
- changes in ambient levels and ground level concentrations due to total emissions from point, line and area sources.
- effects on soils, materials, vegetation, and human health.

**Noise**

- changes in ambient levels due to noise generated from equipment and movement of vehicles.
- effect on fauna and human health.

- **Water**
- availability to competing users
- changes in quality
- sediment transport
- ingress of saline water
- **Land**
- changes in land use and drainage pattern
- changes in land quality including effects of waste disposal
- changes in shoreline/riverbank and their stability
- **Biological**
- deforestation/tree-cutting and shrinkage of animal habitat.
- impact on fauna and flora (including aquatic species if any) due to contaminants/pollutants

- impact on rare and endangered species, endemic species, and migratory path/route of animals.

### **Impact on breeding and nesting grounds**

- **Socio-Economic**
- impact on the local community including demographic changes.
- **Impact on economic status**
- impact on human health.
- impact of increased traffic

# Salient Features of 2006 Amendment

- Environment Impact Assessment Notification of 2006 has decentralized the environmental clearance projects by categorizing the developmental projects in two categories, i.e., Category A and Category B.
- ‘Category A’ projects are appraised at national level by Impact Assessment Agency (IAA) and the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) and Category B projects are appraised at state level.
- State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) and State Level Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) are constituted to provide clearance to Category B process.

- After 2006 Amendment the EIA cycle comprises of four stages
  1. Screening
  2. Scoping
  3. Public hearing
  4. Appraisal
- Category A projects require mandatory environmental clearance and thus we do not undergo the screening process.

Category B projects undergoes screening process and they are classified into two types.

- 1. Category B1 projects (Mandatory requires EIA).
- 2. Category B2 projects (Do not require EIA).
- Thus Category A projects and Category B1 projects undergo the complete EIA process whereas Category B2 projects are excluded from complete EIA process.

## **Study Materials References**

- India Year Book,2020, published by Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, GOI.
- Environment, published by Shankar IAS Academy book publications.